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ABSTRACT

Although a considerable body of research has been developed in recent years on participation in adult education, little has been done from the standpoint of social policy and its impact on participation. To assist investigation of this aspect of participation, three social policy models are presented: market models, progressive-liberal-welfare models, and social control models. The models can be linked to three adult education streams of practice: the vocational, liberal/liberatory, and social reconstruction streams. They can also be linked to sociological theories on a continuum from structural functionalism to conflict theory. A taxonomy of mechanisms found in policy within each social policy model is proposed, and a number of participation research issues for future investigation on this issue are suggested. (Author/KC)

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A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED TAXONOMY FOR SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ON PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

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A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED TAXONOMY FOR SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ON PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

Allan Quigley, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

Although a considerable corpus of research has been developed in recent years on participation in adult education, little has been done from the standpoint of social policy and its impact on participation. To assist investigation of this aspect of participation, this paper presents three social policy models and links them to adult education streams of practice as well as to sociological theory. It then proposes a taxonomy of mechanisms found in policy within each social policy model and suggests a number of participation research issues for future investigation on this issue.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED TAXONOMY FOR SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ON PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Niemi and Nagle (1979) observed that "in every educational setting, an inevitable tension persists among three sets of needs: those felt by the learner, those defined by professional educators, and those derived from institutional and societal expectations" (p.141). While adult education has made a beginning in building a corpus of research on the adult learner and on the various functions surrounding our profession and institutions, we have hardly begun researching the complex questions which underpin the societal and social policy dimensions of adult education. Although the ERIC data base system currently contains in excess of 30,000 entries with "education" and "policy" in their key descriptors, with more than 2000 entries being made per year since 1981, these are mainly concerned with school education issues, not adult education issues nor adult education social policy issues. Our research base has been focused on the individual learner and practice issues and, as a consequence, adult education has tended to be removed from the locus of governmental social policy advisement and formation. Finch (1984, pp. 91-94) has found that the "individual's benefit rationale" is rarely found in a pure form in policy formation or implementation. Instead, if it figures at all, it is as an aspect of the "society's benefit rationale" which more typically underpins social policy formation. Thus, by centering our research on individual learning and practice in the profession--by working out of a frame of reference of "humanistic psychology and sociological functionalism" (Griffin, p. 253)--our field has had very little research to contribute to social policy on a state, provincial, federal or international level.

This point is clearly exemplified in the area of participation research. With the exception of Cookson's (1986) research, participation research has tended to be dominated by psychology and functional sociology. Hoggart (1978) observed that "very few governments respect the objective search for truth, free speculation or the integrity of the individual conscience...few countries have those interlaced middle layers of critical comment which give a characteristic texture to societies which claim to be democratic" (p.54). To contribute to the process of critical comment through systematic research and build "interlaced" layers of advisement on social policy, much closer analyses of the complex "philosophical, moral, psychological and ideological" (Griffin, 1987, p.9) dimensions of social policy are needed.

It is proposed that if adult education had a comprehensive conceptual framework which located the various models of social policy within sociological theory and which linked these to component streams of practice in adult education, we would have a conceptual starting point for social policy research. on participation. However, to more clearly identify and analyze policy within that framework, a taxonomy of the alternate mechanisms characteristic of

policies within each model would be useful. This taxonomy, in turn, will need to be subject to systematic research on the effects of each model in obtaining their respective goals. Thus, we first need a "map of the territory" and then the subsequent research if we are to gain more control of our own destiny and to advise social policy makers of the inherent participation risks and benefits which may accrue from setting off in any particular direction on the map.

This paper will attempt to contribute to this proposed map by: 1) Outlining models for policy analysis using a recent framework by Griffin (1987), 2) by linking these to adult education component streams of practice, 3) by linking both of these to sociological theory and, finally, 4) by proposing some components for a taxonomy of mechanisms of social policy and, 5) suggesting a number of participation research areas within the social policy models.

SOCIAL POLICY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN ADULT EDUCATION

Social policy at its broadest level of definition is the attempt to move from a perception of "what is" to the conception of what "should be" in society through governmental action. The perception of "what is" is the concern with those issues which arise from two archetypal conditions in societies: 1) scarcity of resources and 2) social inequity. "What should be" inevitably results in the attempt to redistribute, to a greater of lesser extent, both valued resources and what Griffin (1987) calls "life chances." Finch (1984) says social policy is "action designed by government to engineer social change" (p. 4). Education as social policy, according to Silver (1980), is "the attempt to use education to solve social problems, to influence social structures, to improve one or more aspects of the social condition, to anticipate crisis" (p. 17). Common to all definitions, social policy implementation inevitably involves a degree of intervention in the lives of citizens. This may mean much needed assistance for some but, on the other hand, the intervention may be seen as unjustified invasion of personal freedoms on the part of others.

Significantly, there is increasing evidence that government is intervening in adult education more directly and more often for social policy purposes. There is reason to believe that adult education is increasingly becoming a a "managed" instrument for governmental lifelong learning policy purposes (eg. Jarvis, 1985; Ohliger & McCarthy, 1971; Stylus, 1984). This growing trend may be observed in recent years in America, Canada and the U.K. in the shift to social policy which engages increased levels of action designed to engineer social change in the economic and unemployment areas of governmental planning. This shift has made its impact felt in our field with governmental policies such as manpower and strategic planning; policies on levels of funding for human capital investment, and increased demand for productivity, excellence and accountability measures. Since, as Griffin notes, "The provision of adult education is, in the end, an outcome of the kind of social and political processes which [social policy] models purport to reflect" (p.22), these policies have altered the nature of participation in certain adult education

programs in ways we have yet to fully understand.

As a way of organizing a "map" for participation research within the social policy context, the following table outlines five areas for consideration from the work of Griffin (1987), Jarvis (1985) and Mitchell (1984):

FIGURE 1: MODELS OF SOCIAL POLICY, ADULT EDUCATION PRACTICE, SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

A. Social Policy Models	MARKET MODELS	PROGRESSIVE-LIBERAL-WELFARE MODELS	SOCIAL CONTROL MODELS
B. Adult Education Practice components	VOCATIONAL	LIBERAL/LIBERATORY	SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION
C. Sociological Theories	STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM	<---------->	CONFLICT THEORY

These linkages may be extended to a proposed taxonomy of social policy mechanisms and a number of participation research issues, as follows:

FIGURE 2: ELEMENTS OF A MECHANISMS TAXONOMY AND PARTICIPATION RESEARCH ISSUES

Social Policy Models	MARKET MODELS	PROGRESSIVE-LIBERAL-WELFARE MODELS	SOCIAL CONTROL MODELS
basic characteristic	EXCHANGE	SYSTEMS/FUNCTIONS	INTERACTION/CONFLICT
metaphor	marketplace	organism	cooperative
ordering principles	incentives	hierarchy	alliances
stability principles	negotiation	homeostasis	power balance
motivational force	utility	need	interest priority
action dynamic	bargaining	cooperation	interest conflict
units of analysis	rational agents	functional structures	formal structures
Areas of participation policy research within models	.adult ed. economics .manpower forecasting .needs priorization .target group studies .input/outcome studies .economics of delivery ."value added" accountability	.adult ed.structures .long term planning ."barriers" issues .resource allocation .governance issues .reform vs.tradition .formative/summative	.adult ed. equity .power distribution .special program .gender/race issues .local impacts .decision processes

Social Policy, Adult Education and Sociological Theory

A. Utilizing the three social policy models from Griffin (1987), shown in Figure 1, which have their basis in the earlier work of Titmus (1958, 1968) and Pinker (1971), market models classically depend upon the encouragement of individual and economic freedom, of self-reliance and, as Titmus (1974) on social policy put it, they seek freedom from officials and bureaucrats who "cannot know best" (p.33). Market models are founded on utilitarian principles which postulate that the denial of individualism is the denial of freedom and initiative. The Jeffersonian arguement is for minimal government or, as Thoreau stated it in 1906: "'That government is best which governs least;' and as I should like to see it...'That government is best which governs not at all;' (1965, p.85). Today, maximum individual, voluntary and private sector initiatives are the favoured approaches of conservative governments such as that of Thatcher, Reagan and Mulroney. For adult education, market models have prevailed with increasing demand for self-financed education--the fees structure of the Open University being a case in point; more competitive, measurable, criteria for "excellence" in education--the current pressures on higher education being a case in point; and a perception that adult education is a marketable commodity which can and should assist economic revitalization--Canada's Learning a Living in Canada (1983) report being a recent example. Further illustrating this point, in Canada federal research funds historically designated for higher education research work are now channeled to the private sector by the federal government to encourage universities to conduct industry-responsive research. Jarvis's (1985) point that "the development of new knowledge in the discipline is itself subject to the control and direction of those who control the funds" (p. 177) is relevant here.

Founded on a utilitarian philosophy and based in structural functional sociological theory, this social policy model looks to vocational and professional education in particular to enhance economic productivity in society. As Jarvis states it, "governmental funding is much more likely [in this model] when educational projects are clearly designed to ensure that the state is the main benficiary" (p. 174)). Questions of participation are framed as questions of manpower planning and human resource development with target group research and economic return as areas of first concern. On the level of research, market models "seek general principles for analysis in the relationships ordinarily found in the marketplace" (Mitchell, p.140). Interestingly, archetypal issues of equity and the redistribution of life chances in the question of participation are also approached on utilitarian grounds. Illiteracy and, recently in America, programs through adult education for the homeless, have recently been supported by the governments for economic/employment reasons. Literacy campaigns conducted in these social policy models primarily seek the assistance of the volunteer sector and industry--the preferred actors in intervention in this model.

The recent shift to market models and the research trends that have followed has been studied in the U.S. (Mitchell,1984) with the finding that today's education policy research has emerged in three broad areas: 1) manpower forecasting and vocationalism, 2) human capital formation and the politics if economic education, and 3) education productivity functions (p.150). Thus,

research has followed the models in education in the U.S. and it is noteworthy that research in education has not attempted to cross over or compare across social policy models, rather, the education policy research has largely been patterned after the models themselves.

Thus, for adult education participation research purposes, the prevailing interest in the social policy sector is for research which assumes needs prioritization and seeks to investigate the effectiveness of human capital investment in, particularly, target groups. The primary value here is one of utilitarian economics, drawing directly on structural functional sociological theory. The here question for this field is whether or not we can be successful in conducting research across models to compare the effectiveness of particular policy mechanisms in attaining their stated participation goals?

Progressive-Liberal-Welfare Models

Goodwin (1982) lists individualism, consent, freedom of economic choice, a meritocratic theory of social justice, and tolerance of dissidence and non-conformity as primary characteristics in this model. Governmental intervention is justified only to the extent that individual or group freedoms and conditions are enhanced. The 1973 Russell Report in the U.K., for instance, claimed that the value of adult education "is not solely to be measured by direct increases in earning power of productive capacity or by any other materialistic yardstick, but by the quality of life it inspires in the individual and generates for the community at large" (D.E.S., p. xi). The assumptions were that individuals and communities within a society of co-operation and interdependence would benefit collectively in intangible ways for the benefit of all society. In the market models, such rhetoric would be considered vague and economically "unmanageable" as policy. In Canada, The Employment and Immigration Commission was created in 1967, as the then Minister Jean Marchand stated in the Ottawa legislature, "to provide a second chance for the people who need it most. These are the men and women who missed the chance to acquire a skill during their youth or whose skill has been made obsolete by technological change." The policies which followed were largely implemented through community colleges and school boards out of the functional liberal-progressive-welfare model. Ten years later, a 1977 Senators' policy review of Adult Basic Education ("ABE") named one of its major funding components (Basic Training for Skill Development) "a major soft spot" (p. 13) in federal funding. This was one which was delivered through the institutions primarily and was now seen as providing "education" rather than "training" for "a far wider range of clients than envisaged in 1967" (p.14). Funding began to to institutions conducting ABE along with the number of student openings in those programs. Today, Canada is experiencing what may be the most extensive literacy campaign in its history utilizing volunteers and the private sector in delivery and advisory capacities. The impact on participation between the ABE policies under the liberal-progressive-welfare model and that of today's market model policies has yet to be researched.

Thus, for participation research purposes, prevailing political ideologies and their attendant sociological theories in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. dictate that participation issues today concerned with social policy redistribution of resources and life-chances in the adult education policy domain will be framed by governments around questions which illuminate policy for the allocation of scarce resources. However, if critical comment is to prevail and if adult education research on participation is to objectively inform and advise, comparative analysis across social policy models is needed.

Social Control Models

At the political level, social control models are given some consideration within the divergent ideologies of Britain's Labour Party and within the Canadian New Democratic Party as elected in various Canadian provinces since the 1930's. There is no established political equivalent in the U.S., although American scholars have made substantive contributions to critical education and critical sociological theory. These models are frequently informed by sociological conflict theory and, although there are non-Marxist orientations within these models, references to Marxist theory are frequent (Griffin, 1987). The New Sociology of Education (eg. Giroux, 1983) has approached the issues of capitalism and schooling equity from three broad perspectives, each based on the reproductionist view that capitalism reproduces itself as it produces its commodities: 1) economic reproduction, 2) cultural reproduction and 3) political/hegemonic reproduction.

Within adult education, practice has tended to range from reformist, frequently Frierian-influenced community-based ideologies, which see need for counter-hegemonic struggle, to a tradition of radical socio-economic reconstruction which adopts a class struggle approach to societal change. Whether Marxist or non-Marxist in orientation, however, as Giroux states it, eductation is seen as being "not about equality but inequality" (p.110). For adult education participation research purposes, equity is the primary issue; indeed, the research area might be more accurately termed "non-participation" research. The issues of cultural, economic and political reproduction and, of late, the emerging theories and research on resistance (eg. Giroux, 1883, 1984; Quigley, 1987; Willis, 1977), necessitates research here which considers the impacts of social policy on equity and the denial of equity in adult education participation research. Griffin (1987, pp 119-126) has reviewed the literature and such questions as the marginality of the elderly and of women in adult education, the ideology inherent in leisure adult education, and the limitations of conducting theory development out of the narrow framework of "humanistic psychology and sociological functionalism" (P.253). What is still required in this model is more extensive research beyond these areas which reveal the wider impact of social control models on participation and the cross-model research on participation to provide a basis of comparison.

CONCLUSION

If, as Bernstein (1971, p.47) maintains, the way "a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control" (p. 47), it would be fair to say that the field of adult education has more often played the role of willing accomplice for policy implementation rather than either informed advisor or full participant in policy formation. This situation has had its deleterious effects (see for instance Roberts, 1982; Stylus, 1984; Thompson, 1980) in both industrialized and developing countries. The challenge to researchers in the field, I believe, is to bring a much stronger analytical framework to the questions surrounding participation by including social policy theory and its attendant sociological theories. I would suggest that full participation of adults in America, Canada and the U.K. in formal and informal adult education, and increased control over our own destiny as a field, cannot be realized until we begin to develop "those interlaced middle layers of critical comment" (Hoggart, 1978, p.54) based on objective knowledge of social policy and its implications for participation.

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